

CALLS ON GOVERNOR AND SCHOOLS TO USE EMEGENCY FUNDS TO RESTORE PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

August 10, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC- Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today sent a letter to Governor Kulongoski and Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo urging them to use the emergency funds approved by the House today to restore cuts in vital services rather than put it in a reserve to avoid future cuts. The funding was included in H.R. 1586, the Education Jobs and Medicaid Assistance Act to provide much-needed one-time emergency funding for states that have had to make devastating cuts in vital services due to the economic downturn. H.R. 1586 is paid for by closing tax loopholes that allow corporations to avoid paying U.S. taxes and cuts in future food stamp benefits among other cuts.

DeFazio specifically urged the Governor to whatever is necessary to use these funds to selectively restore funds to programs critical to our public safety, health and education. And he urged Superintendent Castillo to direct school districts to use the funds to re-hire teachers, reduce class size and restore instruction days.

DeFazio released the following statement about today's vote:

"This is emergency funding, and it should be used as emergency funding, not put in a reserve to avoid future cuts. Oregon is again headed toward having the shortest school year in America. If our kids don't get those school days back this year, we will be short-changing them on their future. We also have some of the largest class sizes. You can't teach a class of 38 or 40 kids in middle school. It isn't a good educational experience. We are stealing from their future. I'm hoping that the funds we vote for today will be used by the state to plug the hole this year. I don't want them to think maybe things will be worse next year, and if we hang onto this funding we can avoid future cuts. No, the cuts are happening today. They are hurting kids today. They need to fill those holes today. This funding should put teachers back to work, lower class size, and get the school year back up to a reasonable length."

"There are other cuts that can be taken care of by this vote as well. In Oregon we have cut back on State Police, even though we have one of the lowest policing ratios in the United States of America. We have huge swaths of our rural areas that do not have adequate law enforcement. We need more state police on the road. Our seniors need home care so they can continue to live independently in their homes. Our community colleges are cutting back at the same time we are seeing record unemployment and people are trying to get training to get a job

in a bad economy. “

“We have an obligation to kids and grandkids to stop borrowing and spending, and today, for once, we’re actually going to meet emergency needs across America and we’re going to pay for it. We are closing some foreign tax loopholes that allow corporations to avoid paying U.S. taxes. When we built the greatest nation on earth, corporations paid 40% of the taxes paid in this country. Today, they pay only 7% because of the loopholes we are closing today. And the Republicans think that is just too much.”

“Well, we can either close this loophole to help fund our kid’s education so they don’t have the shortest school year or the largest class sizes in America. Or we can continue business as usual and continue to subsidize corporations and allow them to hide money overseas. I’m voting with the kids.”